



National Science Foundation
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NSF 14-084

Dear Colleague Letter: NSF Graduate Research Internship Program (GRIP)

Dear Colleague:

The Division of Graduate Education announces the [Graduate Research Internship Program \(GRIP\)](#) to provide professional development to [NSF Graduate Research Fellows](#) through internships developed in partnership with federal agencies (see the [GRIP website](#) for a current list of partner agencies). Through this initiative, NSF Graduate Fellows will participate in mission-related, collaborative research under the guidance of host research mentors at federal facilities and national laboratories. The internship experiences will support Fellows with developing expertise in critical STEM areas, enhancing professional skills, developing networks, and preparing for a wide array of career options. The sponsor agencies will benefit by engaging Fellows in mission-critical projects, helping to develop a highly skilled U.S. workforce in areas of national need.

NSF is pleased to collaborate with other federal agencies to provide internship opportunities through GRIP. Internship details for each partner agency differ and are available through links to agency websites. As additional agencies develop internship partnerships with NSF, updates will be made to the website.

ELIGIBILITY

Internships are available to all NSF Graduate Research Fellows. Applicants must be active NSF Graduate Fellows within the five-year fellowship term, "on tenure" or "on reserve."¹ Active Fellows must be enrolled and making satisfactory progress toward their degrees, and have fulfilled all GRFP reporting requirements. For some agencies, Fellows must be U.S. citizens. A Fellow may submit one application per Partner Agency and may apply to a maximum of two Partner Agencies per fellowship year.

All internship applications are subject to: 1) confirmation by the Fellow's advisor that the Fellow is making satisfactory progress in her or his graduate degree program and that participation in GRIP will enhance the Fellow's graduate education; 2) the availability of funds from NSF and appropriate resources from partner agencies; 3) review of the applications and acceptance by the National Science Foundation and NSF's partner agency. In some cases, Fellows will be required to pass a background and/or security clearance check before they may begin an internship position. Background and/or security clearance checks will be conducted by the individual agencies. Interested Fellows should check to see if they meet the clearance criteria for the agency to which they are applying.

NSF GRFP Fellows will not be employees and will not conduct inherently governmental functions. Fellows must not act in a manner that would lead anyone to believe s/he is an employee of, or a representative of, the partner agencies. Please see the [Guiding Principles](#) for Fellows and partner agencies.

INTERNSHIP FUNDING

Fellows will receive an allowance of \$5,000 from NSF to cover costs associated with the internship, including travel, relocation, research and other expenses. The allowance will be provided through the GRFP institution, as part of the summer or fall GRFP funding increment. The GRFP PI (Graduate Dean) and Financial Officer provide administrative and financial oversight of the internship allowance(s) of NSF Graduate Fellows as part of the GRFP award to the institution. The internship allowance for each NSF Graduate Fellow is reported once on the GRFP Program Expense Report covering the time period of the internship. Fellows selected for a GRIP internship who are on tenure² during the internship will continue to receive their NSF stipend through the home U.S. institution. The NSF stipend remains subject to U.S. tax laws.

The NSF internship allowance is for use by the Fellow during the internship experience identified in the application. The institution will disburse the \$5,000 internship allowance to the Fellow. Proposed internship projects must be a minimum of 10 weeks, and may be up to 12 months. Extensions are subject to the approval of the Fellow's GRFP institution, NSF, and the sponsoring agency. Internship funds may not be transferred to another Fellow.

The support provided by the partner agency differs by agency. For further information, see the agency's [NSF Graduate Fellows website](#). Agency support will be provided directly to the Fellow by the agency.

INTERNSHIP REQUEST SCHEDULE AND CONSIDERATION

GRIP is a three-year pilot program for NSF and Partner Agencies. Please note that the information presented is current at the time of publishing. See [GRIP website](#) for any program updates.

- **September 2014.** GRIP is announced to Fellows and GRFP Institutions. Fellows review available GRIP opportunities on agency websites and may contact possible host researchers to develop their applications.
- Fellows submit GRIP applications through the [GRFP FastLane module](#), adhering to the NSF submission guidelines specified in this Dear Colleague Letter and any Agency-specific deadlines.
- GRFP Coordinating Officials approve the Fellow applications in the [GRFP FastLane module](#).
- GRIP applications are reviewed internally by NSF and by the sponsoring agency.
- Internship awards provided to successful applicants as part of the summer or fall GRFP funding increment.

Successful applicants may commence internships according to the selected Agency's timeline.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARING GRFP INTERNSHIP APPLICATIONS

1. Applications are submitted as one uploaded PDF file by NSF Graduate Fellows through the "GRFP Additional Funding Opportunities" link in the [GRFP FastLane module](#). Use the NSF standard format requirements (e.g. single spaced pages) to prepare the application. The Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) certifies the internship application through use of the [AOR Certification form](#) which is submitted by the Fellow along with the application. The GRFP Coordinating Official approves the GRIP application in the [GRFP FastLane module](#). The GRFP Institution nominates the Fellow and approves the duration, location, and terms of the internship by approving the application in the GRFP module. GRFP Coordinating Officials must approve the applications before an NSF review occurs. Internship applications that do not comply with the application guidelines will be returned without review.
2. GRIP applications must include the following elements:
 - a. Name of Graduate Research Fellow, Fellow ID, name of sponsoring agency, name of

host/sponsoring researcher(s) or project, and proposed dates and duration of the internship.

- b. **Research and Professional Development Plan.** Limit: 2 pages. Fellow will submit a research and professional development plan that includes the expected outcomes of the internship. This plan must describe how the internship experience will:
 - i. Integrate the proposed research activities into the Fellow's graduate degree program and future career goals.
 - ii. Provide mentoring and specialized expertise, equipment, facilities, field sites, data, and/or other resources.
 - iii. Build professional skills and collaborations that will enhance and contribute to the Fellow's professional development and network.
- c. **Supplementary Documents:**
 - i. Fellow's Resume or CV. Limit: 2 pages.
 - ii. A letter of endorsement from the Fellow's faculty research advisor that confirms participation in GRIP will enhance the Fellow's graduate education. The letter should also confirm that the Fellow is making satisfactory progress in her or his graduate degree program. Limit: 2 pages.
 - iii. A signed Certification by the GRFP Institution's Authorized Organizational Representative. The [AOR](#) is required to certify that the organization (or individual) agrees to accept the obligation to comply with award terms and conditions.

INTERNSHIP APPLICATION REVIEW

The following criteria will be used in evaluating the applications:

- The potential opportunities for effective research collaboration;
- The potential for effective professional development for the Graduate Research Fellow;
- The potential for effective career development/opportunities;
- Any agency-specific criteria (see proposed host agency website).

NSF and agency partner program officers will review internship applications. Approval by the NSF and the sponsoring partner agency is required before internships are announced.

Updated Research and Professional Development Plan. Limit: 2 pages. Due by the end of the first two weeks of official start of the internship.

- The Fellow will submit an updated and more detailed version of the research and professional development plan based on the application. The updated plan should include more specific goals and expected outcomes of the internship. Example goals may include, but are not limited to:
 - Proficiency in transferrable professional skills (communication, technical writing, project management, etc.)
 - Focus on career goals
 - Expansion of professional network
- The plan will be submitted to the GRFP Office via email (grfp@nsf.gov).

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

- Fellows who receive internships must submit an Internship Report through the GRFP FastLane Module that details the experience and accomplishments of the internship. The sponsoring agency may have additional reporting requirements. All reporting must be approved for "Public Release" by the sponsoring agency. In some cases, Fellows may have to submit an internal report to the partner agency and a separate "cleared" report to NSF that does not contain sensitive information

but does report on the general accomplishments and professional development of the Fellow through the internship opportunity.

¹ Fellowship Tenure status is the period of time during which Fellows actively use the fellowship award. A Fellow on Reserve status postpones the NSF fellowship support while remaining a full-time student at the affiliated institution.

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